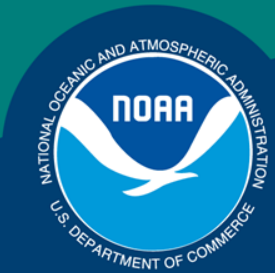


*Science, Service, Stewardship*



## **Atlantic bluefin tuna**

Recent fishery trends – updated through 2015

March 2016

**NOAA  
FISHERIES  
SERVICE**



## **2015 BFT Fisheries in Review**

- **Inseason Actions**
- **Catch/Landings by Category**
  - **Angling Category Information**
  - **Commercial Categories Information**
- **Fishery Performance**



## 2015 Bluefin Tuna Fishing Year Summary

January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015

Quota category	Landings - No. of Fish	Landings - Weight (mt)	2015 Base Quota (mt)	2015 Adjusted Quota <sup>2</sup> (mt)	% Base Quota Taken	% Adjusted Quota Taken
<b>General</b>	<b>3,127</b>	<b>614.8</b>	<b>466.7</b>	<b>646.7</b>	<b>131.7</b>	<b>95.1</b>
<b>Harpoon</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>113.5</b>	<b>100.5</b>
<b>Longline (incl NED)</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>173.3</b>	<b>207.3</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>34.4</b>
NED	96	25.0	25.0	25.0	100.0	100.0
Atlantic (non-NED)	212	42.7	96.4	118.3	44.3	36.1
Gulf	15	3.7	51.9	64.0	28.9	23.4
<b>Trap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Purse Seine</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>40.9</b>
<b>Angling</b>	<b>2,832</b>	<b>113.1</b>	<b>195.2</b>	<b>195.2</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>57.9</b>
School	1,531	26.2	108.4	108.4	24.2	24.2
Lg Sch/Sm med	1,272	80.2	82.3	82.3	97.4	97.4
Trophy	29	6.7	4.5	4.5	148.9	148.9
<b>Reserve</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Total (landings only)</b>	<b>6,807</b>	<b>877.0</b>	<b>1,083.9</b>	<b>1,178.8</b>	<b>80.9</b>	<b>74.4</b>
<b>Total (landings + dead discards)<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>1,020.7</b>	<b>1,083.9</b>	<b>1,178.8</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>86.6</b>

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Currently, the best available annual estimate of U.S. dead discards for 2015 is the 2014 estimate of 138.8 mt for the pelagic longline fishery and the 2015 observed dead discards of 4.9 mt for the purse seine fishery, totaling 143.7 mt. Dead discard estimates for the Harpoon and General categories are in review and will be added at a later date, as appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> The Adjusted Quota column in the table above reflects the adjusted quota as of December 31, 2015. Category quotas were adjusted by inseason and other actions during the year as shown below.

EFFECTIVE DATE	ADDED (MT)	TO	SUBTRACTED (MT)	FROM	PUBLICATION DATE	FR CITATION	ACTION
10-Feb-15	87.4	Reserve	87.4	Purse Seine	11-Feb-15	80 FR 7547	Reallocation per Amendment 7
28-Jul-15	34	Longline	34	Reserve	29-Jul-15	80 FR 45098	Inseason Transfer
31-Jul-15	40	Harpoon	40	Reserve	5-Aug-15	80 FR 46516	Inseason Transfer
26-Sep-15	NA		NA		28-Aug-15	80 FR 52198	Final quota rule
30-Oct-15	100	General	35	Harpoon	4-Nov-15	80 FR 68265	Inseason Transfer
			65	Reserve			
25-Nov-15	80	General	80	Reserve	1-Dec-15	80 FR 74997	Inseason Transfer

This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic tuna fishery interests to keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. To view catch statistics from previous months, please visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/species/tunas/landings/landings\\_archive.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/species/tunas/landings/landings_archive.html) or contact Brad McHale at (978) 281-9260.

### Sign up for Atlantic HMS News

An electronic newsletter informing you of the latest HMS-related actions

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/newslist/>



## **Full list of inseason and Amendment 7 (A7)-related actions for 2015 and 2016 to date**

- **6 daily retention limit adjustments**
- **7 inseason quota transfers**
- **2 A7-related adjustments of PS quota (and Reserve)  
(plus adjustment when BFT quota rule finalized in Aug. 2015)**
- **1 closure (Angling trophy South)**
- **2 other (notification that the NED quota was filled and IBQ  
rules would apply; announcement of Purse Seine category  
fishery start date)**



## **2015 Inseason Actions – Quota Transfers and A7-related Quota Adjustments**

- 21 mt within General category from December 2015 to January-March 2015 (December 2014, A7 authority)
- 87.4 mt from Purse Seine category to Reserve category (February, using A7 formula)
- 34 mt from Reserve category to Longline category (July)
- 40 mt from Reserve category to Harpoon category (August)
- 100 mt (35 mt from Harpoon; 65 mt from Reserve) to General category (October)
- 80 mt from Reserve category to General category (November)

### *For 2016:*

- 24.3 mt within General category from December 2016 to January-March 2016 (December 2015, A7 authority)
- 101.4 mt from Purse Seine category to Reserve category using A7 formula, and in same notice transferred 34 mt from Reserve category to Longline category (January)



## 2015 Inseason Actions – Angling Category Retention Limits (Recreational)

Default daily limit applied January 1-May 14 (private and charter vessels):  
1 school, large school, or small medium BFT/vessel/day (*also in effect now*)

May 15-Dec. 31:

Permit Category (Vessel Type)	Retention Limit per Vessel per Day/Trip
HMS Angling (Private)	1 school BFT (27 to <47") <u>and</u> 1 large school/small medium BFT (47 to <73")
HMS Charter/Headboat (Charter) (when fishing recreationally for BFT)	2 school BFT (27 to <47") <u>and</u> 1 large school/small medium BFT (47 to <73")

Trophy category: 1 large medium/giant (73"+) BFT/vessel/year

➤ Southern area closed June 7

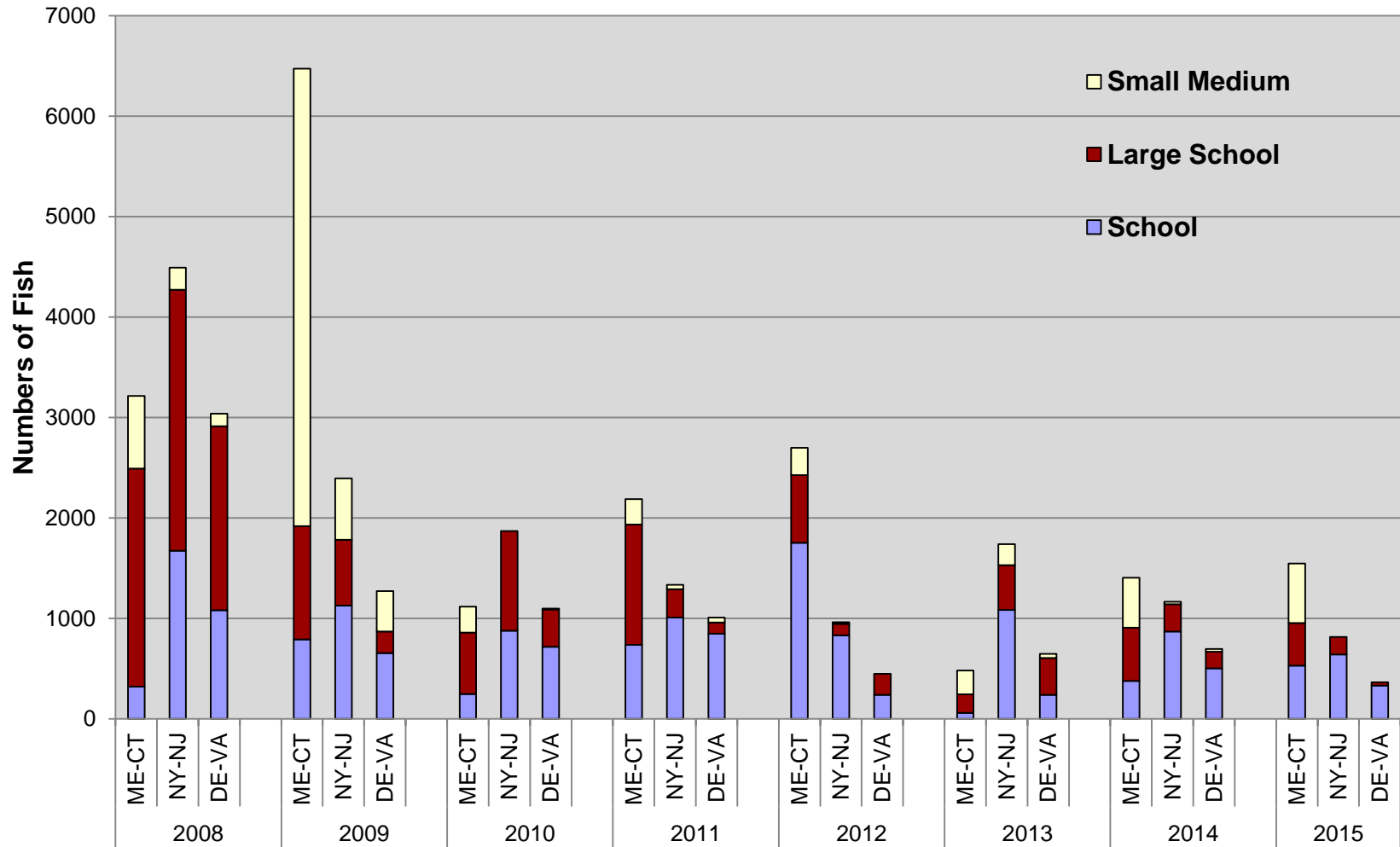


## 2015 Angling Category Landings by Size Class

	Landings (mt)	Quota (mt)	Quota use
<b>School</b>	<b>26.2</b> <b>(8.3 N; 17.9 S)</b>	<b>108.4</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Large School/ Small Medium</b>	<b>80.2</b> <b>(2.2 N; 78 S)</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Large Medium/ Giant (Trophy)</b>	<b>6.7</b> <b>(3.2 N; 3.3 S; 0.2 GoM)</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>149%</b>

Data sources: Large Pelagics Survey (LPS) estimates, NC catch card data, MD catch card data (outside LPS sampling timeframe) and the NMFS Automated Landings Reporting System.

# Recreational Landings by Area



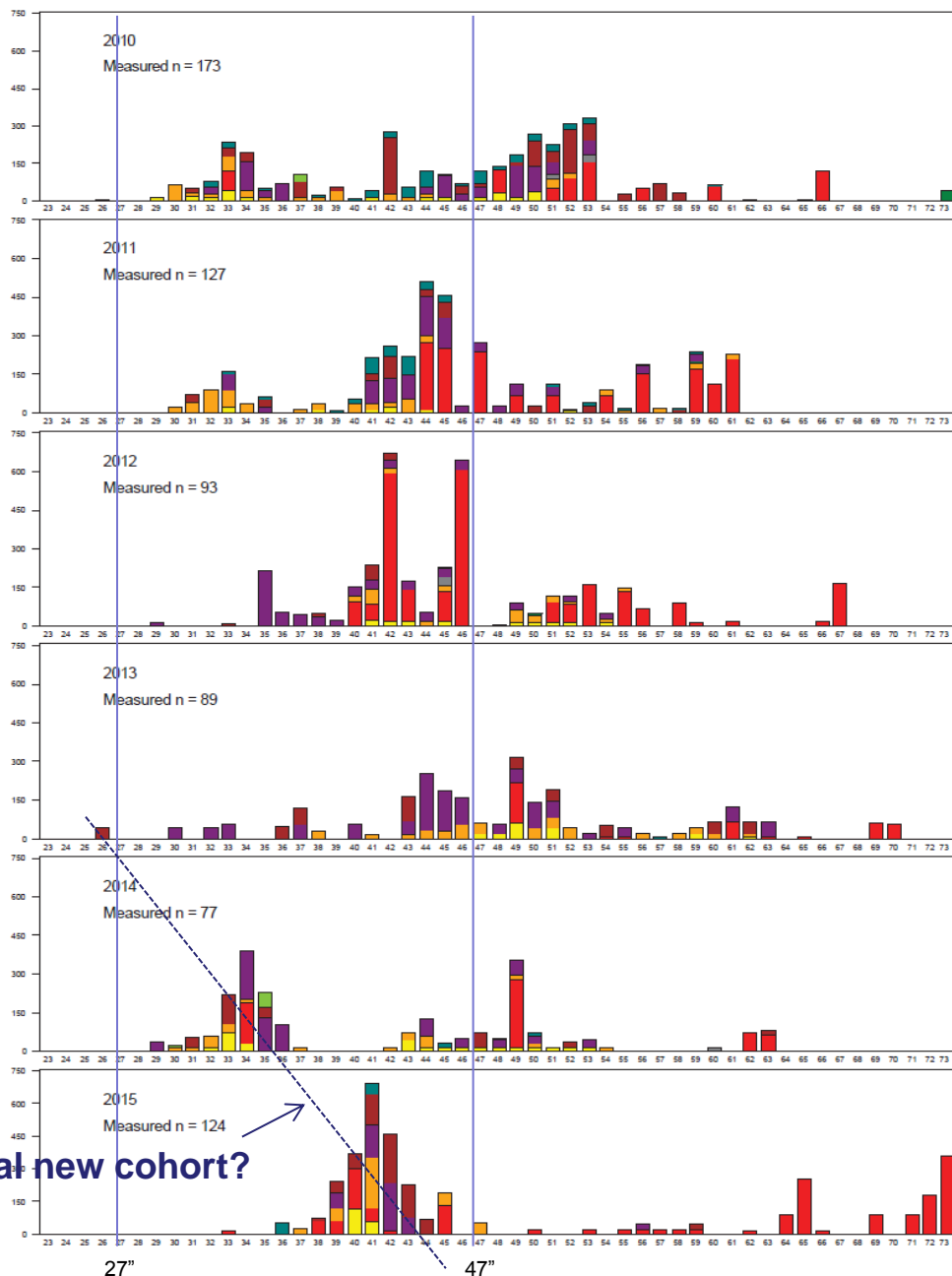
Data source: LPS (for ME-VA only)

Angling category landings of small medium BFT prohibited 6/12-12/31/10 and 4/2-12/31/11



# Large Pelagics Survey: Expanded Catch-at-Length Size Distribution of Angling BFT, 2010-2015

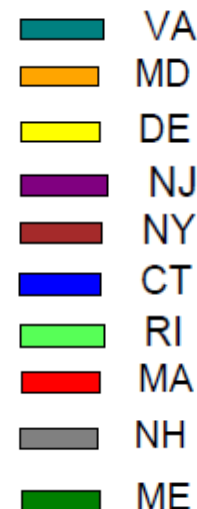
Frequency (No. Fish)



school: 27 to <47"  
large school: 47 to <59"  
small medium: 59 to <73"

Large school and small medium  
have traditionally been managed  
as one size class.

## State





## 2015 Inseason Actions – Commercial Retention Limits

### General Category

January 1 – March 31:	2 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day
June 1 – November 27:	4 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day
November 28 – December 31:	3 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day
<i>January 1 – March 31, 2016:</i>	<i>3 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day</i>

### Harpoon Category

Jun 1 – Nov 15:	2 large medium & unlimited giant BFT/vessel/day
Nov 16 – Dec 31:	<b>Closed</b>



## 2015 General Category Landings Information

	Daily Retention Limit	Landings (mt)	Notes
January 1-March 31	2	31.4	74% of the 42.4-mt adjusted “January” period subquota
June 1-Nov. 27	4	566.8	
Nov 28-Dec 31	3	16.6	
<b>Annual Total</b>		<b>614.8</b>	<b>138% of the 446.7-mt baseline General category quota; 95% of the 646.7-mt adjusted quota</b>

Percent of Trips Landing at least one BFT (June 1 through November 27):

1 BFT: 76%

2 BFT: 14%

3 BFT: 5%

4 BFT: 5%



## 2015 Harpoon Category Landings Information

	Daily Retention Limit	Landings (mt)	Notes
Large Medium	2	8.2	
Giant	unlimited	35.6	
<b>Annual Total</b>		<b>43.8</b>	<b>113% of the 38.6-mt baseline Harpoon category quota; just over 100% of the 43.6-mt adjusted quota</b>

*Percent of Trips Landing at least one BFT:*

0 Lg. Med: 50%

1 Lg. Med: 24%

2 Lg. Med: 26%

*Percent of Trips Landing at least one BFT:*

0 Giant: 14%   1 Giant: 34%   2 Giants: 30%   3 Giants: 9%   4+ Giants: 13%



## **BFT Reporting Requirement for General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat Categories**

- Vessels are required to report the length of all BFT retained or discarded dead through online catch reporting system within 24 hours of landing or end of each trip
- Outreach to the fishery continues. Mobile app in development.

Comparison of dealer and online BFT reports for 2015:

Quota Category	Dealer Reports		Online Reports		% Compliance	
	# Fish	# Fishermen	# Fish	# Fishermen	% Fish Reported	% Fishermen Reporting
General	3,126	664	441	88	14.1	13.3
Harpoon	278	7	254	7	91.4	100.0
Total	3,404	671	695	95	20.4	14.2



## 2015 Purse Seine Fishery

Start date: July 6

(start date is set annually, within a range of June 1-August 15; season ends Dec. 31)

### Retention limits:

- Large medium BFT (73 to <81"): no more than 15%, by weight, of the total amount of giant BFT/year
  - **Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) issued for a 2nd year (for July 6-Dec 31),** exempting the one vessel that fished from this limit, under specific terms and conditions (see next slide)
- Giant BFT (81"+): unlimited
- BFT <73": no more than 1%, by weight, of the skipjack and yellowfin landed on that trip



## Bluefin Tuna Purse Seine Fishery Comparison – 2013, 2014, and 2015

	2013	2014 (w/EFP)	2015 (w/EFP)	Average Change (w/EFP vs. 2013)
<b>Observer Coverage</b> (Min. 5% required by ICCAT, as measured in number of sets or trips)	60%	100%	100%	
<b>Landings</b>	28.8 mt	37.6 mt	34.0 mt	+ 7.0 mt +24%
Large medium (73 to <81")	1.85 mt	9.57 mt	11.5 mt	+ 8.7 mt +470%
Giant (81"+)	26.99 mt	28.07 mt	22.5 mt	+ 1.7 mt +6%
<b>Dead Discards</b>	13.7 mt	4.2 mt	4.9 mt	-9.2 mt -67%
<b>Catch</b>	42.5 mt	41.8 mt	38.9 mt	-2.2 mt -5%



## **Examination of Ex-vessel Price/lb for BFT Caught with Harpoon Gear and Purse Seine**

Pre-Amendment 7, the purse seine fishery started on July 15 each year. Regulations allowed a delay to as late as August 15.

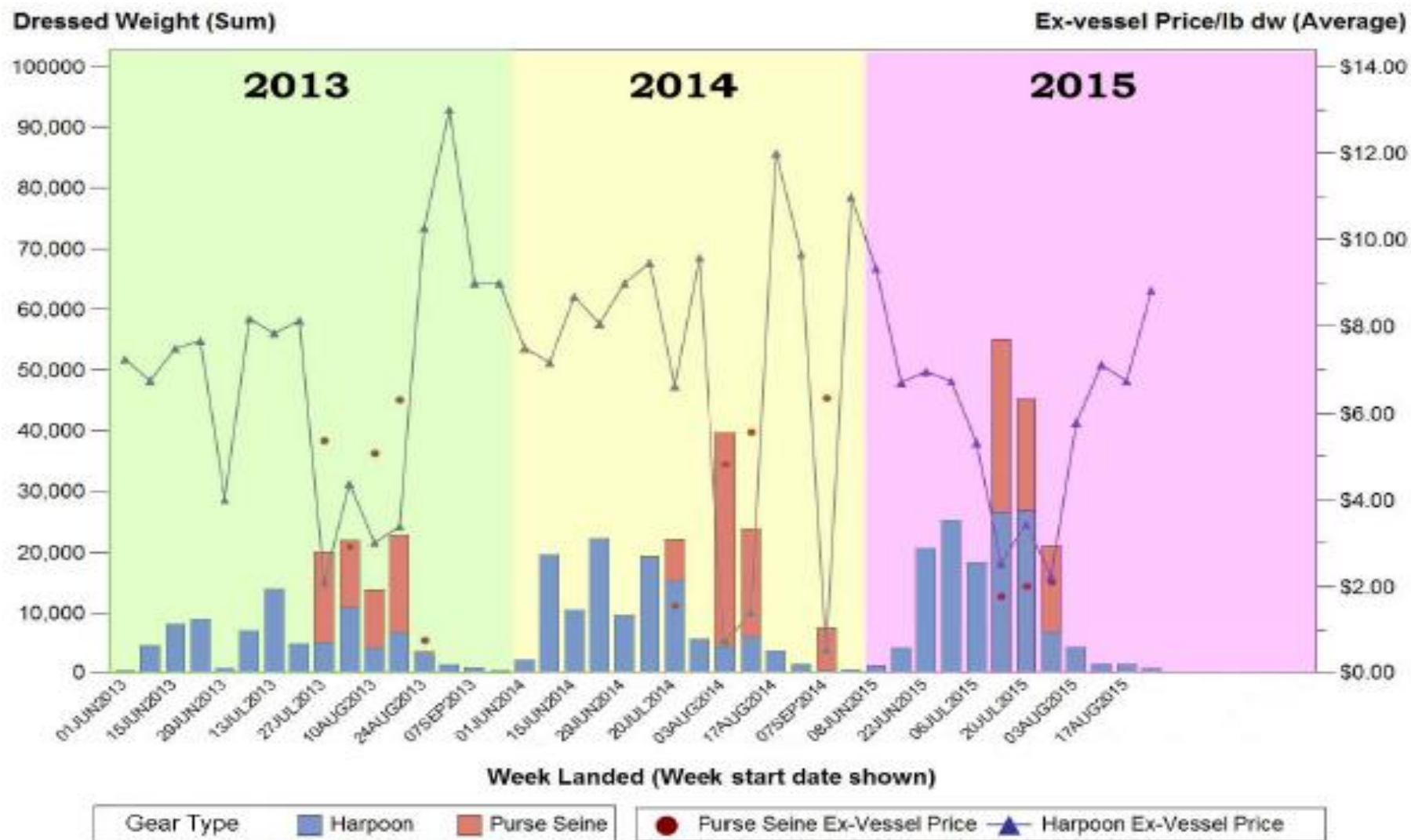
Currently, the purse seine start date is set annually, within a range of June 1-August 15, based on:

- variations in season distribution;
- BFT abundance or migration patterns;
- cumulative and projected landings in other commercial fishing categories;
- the potential for gear conflicts on the fishing grounds; or
- market impacts due to oversupply

In 2015 and 2016, NMFS has received some comments both for and against an earlier purse seine fishery start date.

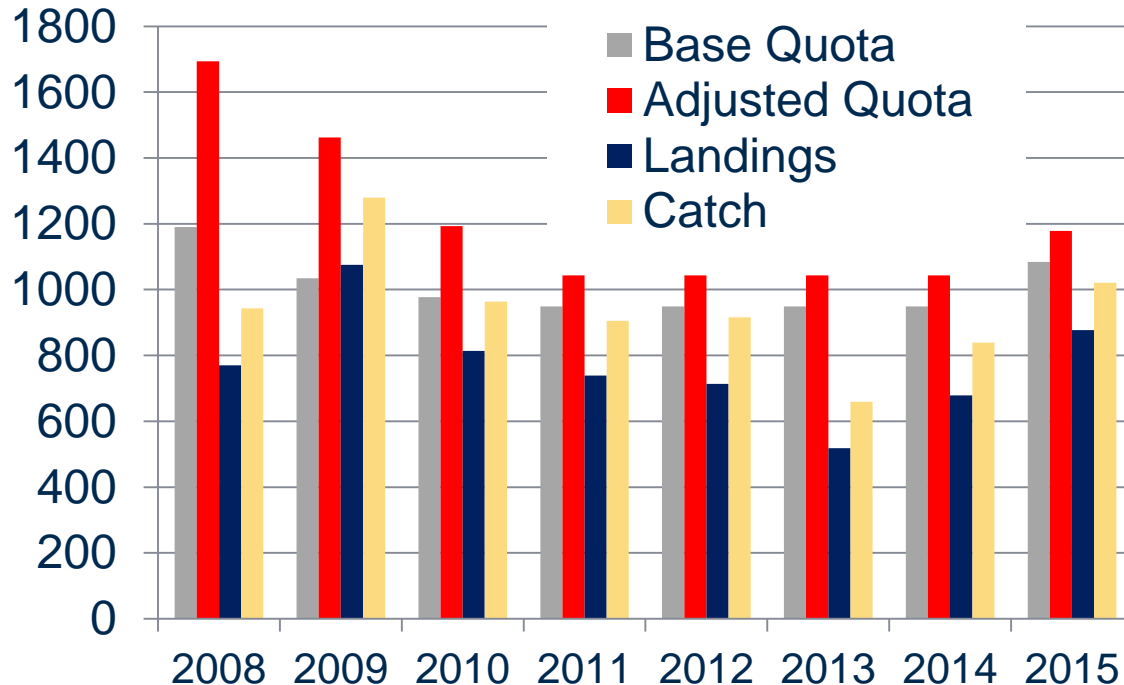


# Ex-vessel Price/lb for BFT Caught with Harpoon Gear and Purse Seine, 2013-2015





## U.S. BFT Landings, Catch, and Quotas (mt)



In 2015, total landings amount was 877 mt, which corresponded to 74% of the U.S. adjusted quota (1,178.8 mt) and 81% of the base quota (1,083.9 mt). Total 2015 catch was 1,020.7 mt (94% of the U.S. adjusted quota and 87% of the base quota). Preliminary 2015 underharvest (adjusted quota-catch)=158.1 mt. ICCAT limit on carryover to 2016=108.4 mt.

Data source: Landings from BFT dealer report database, Large Pelagics Survey estimates, NC catch card data, MD catch card data (outside LPS sampling timeframe) and the NMFS Automated Landings Reporting System. **2014 estimate of 138.8 mt for the pelagic longline fishery and the 2015 observed dead discards of 4.9 mt for the purse seine fishery, totaling 143.7 mt used as proxy for 2015 dead discards.**



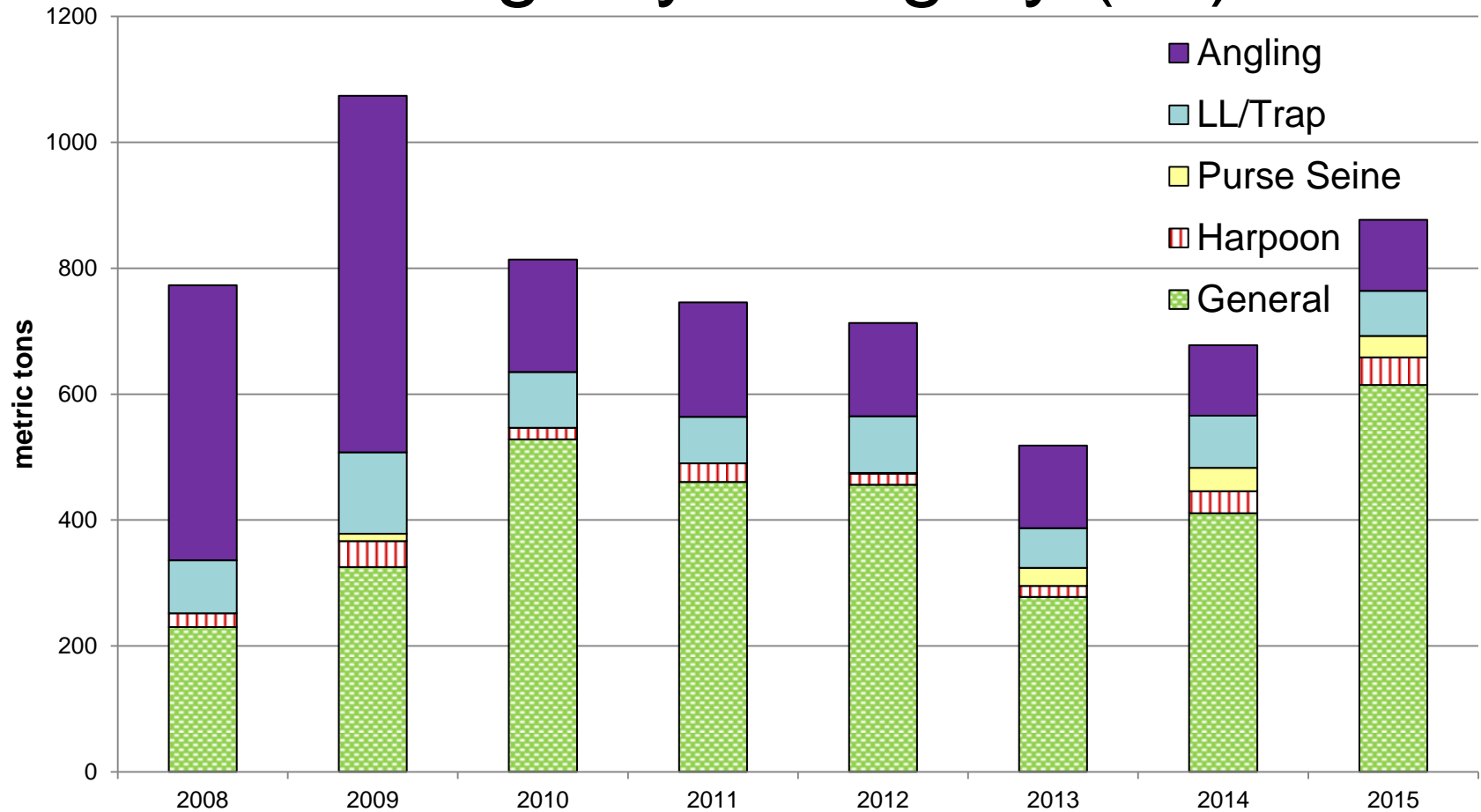
## 2015 BFT Dead Discards

Currently, the best available annual estimate of U.S. dead discards for 2015 is **143.7 mt**, which is:

**the 2014 estimate of 138.8 mt for the pelagic longline fishery +  
the 2015 observed dead discards of 4.9 mt for the purse seine fishery**

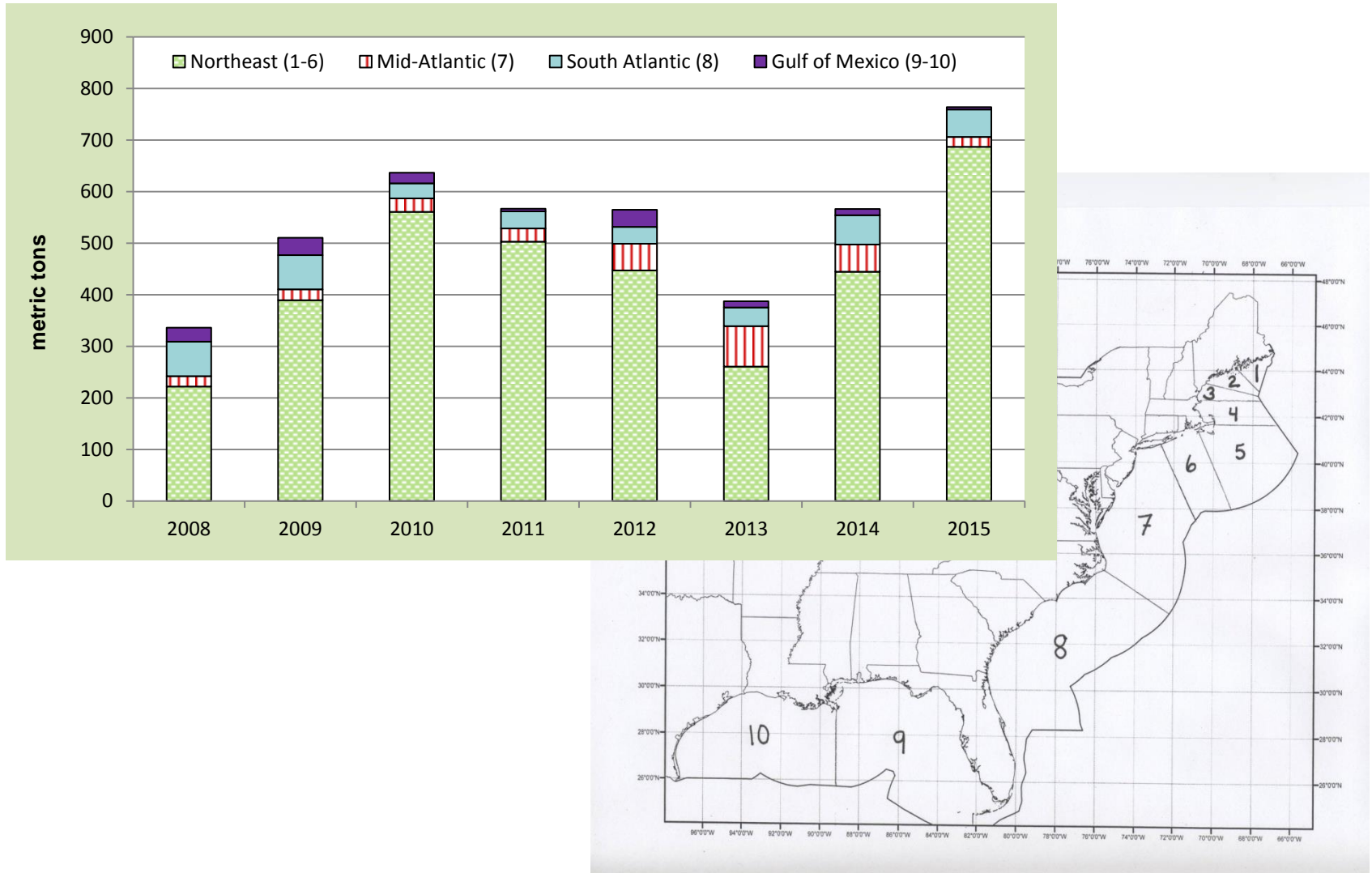
- Reported commercial handgear dead discards are currently under review for quality control and will be added as appropriate.
- For instance, initial reports indicated 71 fish discarded dead for a Harpoon category trip. Upon verification, it was one 71-inch fish.
- For the General category, 85 dead discards (in number) of large medium or giant BFT were reported. Upon verification, majority were errors in data entry on website. Additional verification and website review underway.

# Landings by Category (mt)



Longline and Trap combined because both are incidental fisheries.

# Commercial Landings by Area





## **Questions/Feedback**

### Upcoming 2016 Actions:

- Angling category retention limit adjustment
- General category retention limit adjustments
- Harpoon large medium retention limit adjustments?
- Purse Seine category start date
- Others?

Stay tuned - more A7 and Longline data in next presentation